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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRUSSELS 001074

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TAGS: BK MARR PREL EUN USEU BRUSSELS

SUBJECT: SOLANA ON BOSNIA: PARTNERSHIP REQUIRES TRUST, TOO

REF: STATE 51534

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Kyle Scott. Reason: 1.5 (B) (D).

¶1. (C) This is a joint USEU/USNATO message. Policy recommendation in para 12.

¶2. (C) Summary: In an animated discussion with Ambassadors Schnabel and Burns March 9 on planning for a post-SFOR EU mission in Bosnia, EU HiRep Javier Solana said, "If you want the EU to be your partner in Europe, the US must learn to trust us." Solana argued that U.S. proposals (reftel) for a NATO HQ in Sarajevo led by a two-star officer, as well as views on Dayton authorities and continuing NATO responsibility for PIFWCs, "will not fly." He stressed that clarity of command required that the EUFOR commander must be the final authority, legally and practically. Ambassador Burns told Solana that the US wants the EU mission to succeed, and that we would continue to work practically with the EU to resolve misunderstandings and outstanding problems. However, he reaffirmed that we continue to support an important role for a NATO HQ in defense reform, counter-terrorism, and PIFWCs. Burns urged that we work pragmatically to iron out differences before the transition.

¶3. (C) Solana's reaction to the US position reflects the EU concern that an EU-led mission in Bosnia be clearly perceived in Bosnia as the supreme authority, which we heard again from the EU at the March 10 NAC-PSC (see USNATO 242). Ambassador Burns used the NAC-PSC to assuage these concerns, restating that the US wants the EU to succeed and fully accepts that the EU will have the lead role in post-SFOR Bosnia. He said the US would work to make sure that the Bosnians understand this fact. USEU and USNATO recommend that the USG take a second look at the question of the hierarchy of ranks in Bosnia between the EU and NATO military leaders. In order to avoid a senseless bidding war over ranks between NATO and the EU, one solution would be for the NATO commander in Sarajevo to be a one-star officer, as opposed to a two-star. Not only would this be seen as a positive gesture by the EU, but it would remove the incentive for the EU to put a three-star officer in command of its operation, thereby ensuring that the AFSOUTH Deputy Commander in Naples would remain the higher ranking officer ) a key point in our favor as we seek to maintain a strict adherence to Berlin Plus principles. End Summary.

¶4. (C) Ambassadors Burns and Schnabel met March 9 with EU High Representative Javier Solana to review planning for a possible transition from SFOR to a EU-led mission in Bosnia. Ambassador Burns noted that a positive response to Solana's proposals on exchange of liaison offices at SHAPE and EU Military Staff would be forthcoming soon from NATO. He stressed that the US wants an EU mission in Bosnia to succeed, and agrees that the EU must be seen to be in charge in Bosnia after SFOR shuts down. We want to avoid the perception of competition between the EU and NATO, Ambassador Burns stressed. He outlined reftel views on NATO's post-SFOR role in Bosnia, including continuing responsibilities for defense reform, counter-terrorism, and apprehension of PIFWCs.

EU Accepts Any NATO Nominee in an "International Capacity"

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¶5. (C) Solana said he was surprised that a NATO response to his proposals on liaison offices had been so long in coming, and confirmed that the EU would respect DSACEUR's decision to nominate any officer to fill the NATO liaison billets at EU Military Staff, regardless of nationality (a key point for non-EU allies Turkey, Norway and Canada). Solana had delivered this message personally to the Turkish CHOD at the beginning of the week, emphasizing that the Turks were "more than welcome, they are super-welcome." Ambassador Burns welcomed this statement, and encouraged Solana to repeat it at the March 10 NAC/PSC.

BOSNIA: DO U.S. POSITIONS REFLECT LACK OF TRUST IN EU?

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¶6. (C) Turning to Bosnia, Solana became highly animated. He said the U.S. position on continuing roles for a NATO HQ seemed to contradict the basic message of "mission accomplished." Instead, it appeared the US seeks a joint NATO/EU operation, rather than an EU-led mission using Berlin Plus. The end result turned Berlin Plus on its head: instead

of the EU having guaranteed access to NATO assets, it appeared the US wished to maintain NATO authority in Bosnia while using only EU assets on the ground.

¶7. (C) He pointed to the US proposal for a NATO HQ led by a two-star general of equal rank to the EUFOR commander as one example. This would blur lines of authority to the local population. It must be clear that the EUFOR commander is the final authority. NATO will have a small HQ of a couple hundred people, many not in uniform. The EU will command several thousand troops. Clarity of command requires that final authority in Bosnia be vested in the EUFOR commander. If the EU and NATO are to be partners, then NATO must be prepared to trust the EU, Solana stressed.

¶8. (C) U.S. insistence on NATO HQ responsibility for apprehension of PIFWCs was another sign of "lack of trust." The NATO HQ in Sarajevo would be too small to have any operational capability. Any operations against a PIFWC would require local forces to provide area support for a Special Forces operation mounted from outside Bosnia. That is how it has been up until now under SFOR command, and that is how it should continue once EUFOR takes over. But since EUFOR will provide the area support, the EUFOR commander must have the same authorities now vested in the SFOR commander. Solana briefly reviewed the U.S. points in reftel and said flatly "these will not fly." Instead, he suggested that NATO allies could continue to mount operations against PIFWCs, but that they must be under the ultimate direction of the EUFOR commander on the ground.

¶9. (C) Ambassador Burns stressed that the U.S. proposes vesting Dayton authorities in DSACEUR or an appropriate official in AFSOUTH, to be delegated to NATO or the EU as needed to complete their missions. Solana was not swayed, saying the US needs to be ready to trust an EU general. He pointed out that the circumstances for EUFOR could not be better for the US: our most trusted European ally, the UK, will occupy every key position all the way up the command ladder. Lord Ashdown is still in place, a UK commander will lead EUFOR, report to a British officer as DCINC at AFSOUTH, who in turn will report to a Brit as DSACEUR.

¶10. (C) Solana concluded that the impression left by US positions was that Washington is still not ready to trust the EU to take on this mission. The EU is ready to do the policing mission, provide the resources to assist the Bosnians and try to eventually bring them into Europe. To be successful, it needs the visibility and authority to carry out those tasks. If the U.S. has a political problem with this, it should say so outright. Ambassador Burns assured Solana that the U.S. supports an EU-led mission, and want to help it be a success. He promised to convey Solana's views to Washington. In addition, he argued that the U.S. proposals for a residual NATO headquarters were limited, practical, and common-sensical. There was full support for them in Washington.

¶11. (C) Post-Script: At the NAC-PSC the next day, Ambassador Burns used his intervention to reiterate our basic message while allaying EU fears about US intentions vis--vis the SFOR transition. Noting that Bosnia will become the template for Berlin Plus, Burns said that the US wants the EU to succeed. He said that the US agrees that the EU will be in the lead in Bosnia, as it will have the preponderance of forces on the ground, and that we will do everything to make it abundantly clear to the Bosnians that the EU, not NATO, had the leading role. The Ambassador assured the EU that NATO would work with the EU on PIFWCs and that CT operations are aimed at preventing foreign terrorists from gaining a foothold in Bosnia. He said that Dayton was a complex issue that would have to be resolved, but that clearly the EU would need to be vested with its powers, as would NATO. Burns suggested a possible model would be to vest the authorities in DSACEUR, as he would be in both NATO and EU chains of command. After the meeting, Solana thanked Ambassador Burns for his remarks, which he said clearly articulated US positions in a way that had given the process positive momentum by showing the US commitment.

COMMENT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

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¶12. (C) The intensity of Solana's reaction reflects the need to continue to work with the EU on the details of a hand-off. To help keep the process on track, one area where compromise is possible without crossing our redlines is the rank of the U.S. general in charge of NATO HQ Sarajevo. We understand that the EU has sent mixed signals in the past on whether their EUFOR commander would be a three-star general and leave it to the US military to assess whether the EU has a valid point about clarity of command. We believe that the EU has a valid point about the need for political clarity in Bosnia. In particular, the Europeans have been adamant with us that their own history in Bosnia peacekeeping requires that the EU be seen as a credible guarantor of security. We believe making the Senior Military Representative in Bosnia a

one-star general makes sense as an area to show flexibility with the EU. It would give nothing away on the continuing operational role for the U.S. and NATO and is consistent with current NATO practice in its headquarters in Tirana and Skopje (which was recently downgraded to a one star billet). Finally, by removing the incentive for the EU to send a three-star to lead its Bosnia force, we would ensure the seniority of the AFSOUTH Deputy Commander, thereby reinforcing the position of this NATO command in the EU's chain of command.

SCHNABEL